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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organisations

Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/25 of 17 October 1999 in which the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), to continue to promote cooperation between the two organizations and requested him to submit to it at its fifty-sixth session a report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report deals with the main initiatives and activities undertaken over the last two years by the United Nations system and OIF within the context of cooperation on preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peace-building and in the areas of promotion of human rights and economic, social and cultural development.

3. The Hanoi Summit, which was held in 1997, adopted the Charter of OIF, under which the Organization was assigned the objectives of assisting in the establishment and development of democracy, the prevention of conflicts, the strengthening of the rule of law and protection of human rights, the intensification of dialogue between cultures and civilizations, the establishment of closer ties among peoples and the strengthening of solidarity through multilateral cooperation activities with a view to promoting the growth of their economies.

II. Political cooperation between secretariats

4. In the application of the agreement between the United Nations and OIF of 25 June 1997, political issues constitute one of the principal areas of cooperation. In that area, cooperation between the two organizations takes place usually between their respective secretariats. It mostly takes the form of regular contacts with the Office of the Permanent Observer for OIF in New York on issues that are being actively followed by the United Nations and OIF, with exchanges of information and analyses and working sessions both between senior officials of the two organizations and at the expert level.

5. In that spirit and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/2, OIF participated in the Fourth High-Level United Nations-Regional Organizations Meeting which took place in New York on 6 and 7 February 2001. The subject of the meeting was cooperation for peace-building.

* The footnote requested by General Assembly resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

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6. At that meeting OIF expressed its views concerning international cooperation on peace-building. It, inter alia, emphasized the usefulness of increased sharing of information regarding the individual experiences and capacities of each organization as regards peace-building. Concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations, it called for strengthening synergies between the programmes of international organizations, bilateral cooperation and the programmes and activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations and using them to build the peace desired by the democratic institutions of the State concerned and non-governmental actors. It also called for exchanges of academic studies on peace-building and appealed to the Bretton Woods institutions to give due consideration to the special needs of countries emerging from conflict.

7. The meeting prepared a framework for cooperation for peace-building to guide the future cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations in that area and identified possible cooperation activities and specific follow-up measures.

8. Since the eighth Summit of Heads of State and Government of countries that use French as a common language, which was held at Moncton, Canada, in September 1999, OIF has further expanded and intensified its political and diplomatic interventions. It has continued its actions to promote peace in Burundi, in the Central African Republic, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Togo and has instituted new actions in the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Haiti, inter alia, by sending facilitation missions or information and contact missions and by having representatives of the Secretary-General of OIF participate in peace talks.

9. Because of the active role it is playing in the efforts of the international community to contribute to a settlement of the conflict in Burundi, the United Nations invited the Special Envoy of OIF to participate in the various meetings of special envoys and special representatives in/to Burundi organized in 1999 and 2000. The first such meeting — which was attended by the special envoys and special representatives of Canada, the European Union, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United States, the United Nations and OIF — was held on 19 October 1999, at a time when the health of Mwalimu Nyerere, facilitator of the Arusha peace process in Burundi, had suddenly deteriorated. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat continued these consultations with the special envoys and special representatives when Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, took over from Mwalimu Nyerere. Three such meetings were held in 2000.

10. In the context of the OAU peace process in the Comoros, the United Nations and OIF continue to exchange information on political developments in that country and to consult regularly concerning what should be done to effectively support OAU efforts. On 17 February 2001, the Comorian parties, including the Government and the Anjouans, signed a new framework agreement for reconciliation in the Comoros, under the auspices of OAU and OIF. In his statement of 24 April 2001, the Secretary-General of the United Nations praised OAU, OIF and their partners for their respective efforts which had made it possible to reach a peace and reconciliation agreement in the Comoros.

11. At the meetings of the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, held on 24 and 25 January 2001, OIF made a statement in the presence of the heads of State of the signatories to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. In it, OIF stressed the support given to the Lusaka Agreement by the heads of State and Government of OIF at the Moncton Summit, and the commitment of the Organization's Secretary-General to the search for a negotiated solution to the Congolese conflict, inter alia, through the good offices missions which he sent to that country and to the region only a few weeks prior to the start of the crisis.

12. OIF participated in the special meeting on security and development in the Central African Republic which the United Nations organized jointly with the German authorities in New York, on 15 and 16 May 2000 to follow up on Security Council resolution 1271 (1999). Before that, it had been associated with the five preparatory meetings organized by the Department of Political Affairs with the group of friends of the Central African Republic.

13. A delegation from the Central African Republic, led by the Prime Minister, was present at the meeting. There were 66 delegations representing 48 countries — including the members of the Security Council — and representatives of the World Bank, the International

Monetary Fund, the OAU, the European Commission, the African Development Bank, OIF and other regional institutions and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system. The purpose of the meeting was to mobilize the support of the international community for programmes for the restructuring of the armed forces and for the demobilization and reintegration of retired military personnel and for the development programme set up by the Central African Government.

14. OIF reiterated its solidarity with the Central African people and Government and announced a series of projects to be implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The projects related to areas (support for democratic institutions, promotion of human rights, rural development and so on) which had been identified by the mission OIF had dispatched to Bangui, from 2 to 5 May 2000, in preparation for the meeting in New York.

15. The involvement of OIF in the process of stabilization and reconstruction in the Central African Republic was drawn to the attention of the Security Council in a further statement by OIF to the Council, on 23 January 2001. At that meeting, OIF pointed out that it had always been interested in that member country and recalled the efforts the French-speaking countries had made to restore peace in the Central African Republic following the mutinies that broke out in that country in 1996 and 1997, inter alia, by facilitating the conclusion of the Bangui Agreements and by contributing actively to the implementation of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). It reiterated that it was prepared to contribute to the international community's efforts at that phase of the peace-building through a series of economic and social assistance measures. To that end OIF dispatched two missions to Bangui, in order to identify, together with the Central African authorities, the needs and possibilities for assistance.

16. In Guinea Bissau, OIF helped ensure that the elections proceeded smoothly by sending high-quality observers. The five-member OIF mission, which was led by the President of the Supreme Court of Benin, participated along with other observer missions in all phases of the observation of the electoral process. They were coordinated by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau. At the request of the Supreme Court of Guinea-Bissau, OIF also made available to that institution an adviser from the Supreme Court of Benin, an expert in electoral claims.

17. In accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the United Nations and OIF have continued to consult with a view to strengthening their cooperation in the area of electoral assistance and democracy. This cooperation came about during the electoral observation missions coordinated by the United Nations during the presidential elections in Chad in 2001. The two organizations have also cooperated closely in providing technical assistance in the preparation of and support for the electoral process in Chad in 2001.

18. On 5 and 6 March 2001, the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs paid a working visit to OIF headquarters in Paris. There senior United Nations and OIF officials agreed on a number of measures to strengthen their cooperation by, inter alia: (a) exchanging information on future requests for electoral assistance received from Member States; (b) having OIF participate, if possible, in needs assessment missions conducted by the Electoral Assistance Division in member countries of OIF; (c) making available OIF legal experts and mediators to participate in certain United Nations missions; (d) having OIF participate in workshops and training seminars held by the Electoral Assistance Division; and (e) including OIF electoral experts in the list of experts of the Electoral Assistance Division.

19. Still on the subject of promotion of the rule of law, democracy and human rights, the United Nations was involved in the preparation and holding of the symposium on the Practices of Democracy, Rights and Freedoms in the French-speaking Community world, held at Bamako in November 2000. This symposium brought together representatives of Governments and also parliamentarians, mayors, experts, academics and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations and civil society. It culminated in the adoption of a political declaration proclaiming that OIF and democracy are indivisible, clearly expressing its rejection of any seizure of power by force, and for the first time giving OIF the means to react strongly to any interruption in the democratic process and to violations of human rights in the francophone world.

20. Finally, given that the General Assembly, by resolution 53/22, proclaimed 2001 the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, I welcome the recent initiatives of the International Organization of la Francophonie in the preparation of the ninth Summit of Heads of State and Government of countries that use French as a common language, which will have as its theme "dialogue of cultures". OIF organized two colloquiums, one in cooperation with the League of Arab States, in Paris, on 30 and 31 May 2000, on the subject "Francophonie — Arab world: a dialogue of cultures", and the other with lusophone and hispanophone organizations (the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Secretariat for Ibero-American Cooperation and the Latin Union), in Paris on 20 and 21 March 2001, on the topic: "Three linguistic communities and the challenges of globalization".

21. In June 1999, OIF and the United Nations signed an agreement establishing a trust fund for technical cooperation between the two organizations. In that regard, the Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie has made available to the United Nations young experts for periods of up to two years, including one in the Electoral Assistance Division and another in the Africa II Division of the Department of Political Affairs.

III. Cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields and with the programmes and funds of the United Nations and its specialized agencies

22. Apart from the strengthened cooperation between secretariats in the political area, the United Nations programmes, funds and agencies, several of which are linked to OIF through separate cooperation agreements, have intensified their cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

23. During the period under review, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and OIF have cooperated closely in the context of the technical cooperation for development project. In June 1999, they signed an agreement establishing a trust fund to finance project activities. One of the main objectives of the project is to involve experts from developing countries in the technical cooperation activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the field or in the activities of other United Nations offices. In July 2001, over 20 experts funded by OIF under this agreement were already working at the United Nations.

24. OIF participated actively in several meetings organized by the United Nations, in particular the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (5 to 9 June 2000) and the special session entitled "World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalized World" (26 June to 1 July 2000).

25. In accordance with the decision taken at the OIF Summit in Moncton, the first OIF conference on women took place in Luxembourg in February 2000, in preparation for the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on women. The conference focused on power and development, two priority questions addressed in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Luxembourg Declaration, which was circulated at the special session, reaffirmed the commitments made at Beijing and outlined some strategic measures for their realization. OIF also submitted a related declaration as a contribution to the special session of the General Assembly on social development.

26. OIF also participated actively in the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Brussels in May 2001. Consultations among ministers and heads of delegation of the least developed countries members of OIF were held under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of OIF on 13 May 2001, just before the conference. Moreover, on 18 May, the latter joined with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the official ceremony to mark the signing of the bilateral investment agreements which were negotiated with the least developed countries members of OIF in January 2001 in Geneva.

Department of Public Information

27. OIF and the Information Technology Section of the Department of Public Information have strengthened and broadened the cooperation which they

began in 1998. To further their efforts in the area of training in the use of the Internet as a development tool, the Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie and the Institut francophone des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la formation held two training seminars in Beirut at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). These two events, conducted in Arabic and French, were also a result of cooperation with UNDP and received support from the Information Centres Service and the United Nations Information Centre at Beirut. The United Nations and OIF are jointly bearing the costs of the seminars, and are together providing the trainers and making the practical arrangements.

28. The first seminar, held in October 2000, followed the format for the inaugural seminar in Abidjan in 1999 by bringing together 30 experts in institutional communications coming mainly from ministries of education, information/communications or development/planning with representatives of the Information Centres in North Africa and members of ESCWA, along with the representatives of the ESCWA Information Centre and the UNDP office at Beirut. The seminar centred on workshops for dissemination of and familiarization with the use of Internet tools, and a presentation on Internet resources offered by the United Nations system and OIF and other francophone resources.

29. The second seminar, held in April 2001 on the topic "Use of the Internet and the media", brought together around 30 representatives of the media established in Beirut. Aimed at journalists, the seminar centred on workshops on familiarization with the use of Internet tools, presentations and discussions on the contribution of the Internet to traditional media activities, its interface with those media and such issues as copyrights, in addition to a general presentation on the Internet resources offered by the United Nations system and OIF.

30. A discussion group for participants in the seminars entitled "Franconu" has been established on the Internet. It allows members and addressees to exchange information on the development of the Francophone Internet, and their experiences in the use and development of Internet sites.

31. On 23 February 2000, the United Nations Information Centre at Paris participated in a colloquium on "Cultural diversity and dialogue among cultures in la Francophonie" organized by the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie, at UNESCO headquarters.

32. La Francophonie has made available to the Information Technology Section an expert specializing in computers and new information technology and has funded the post for two years pursuant to a specific agreement concluded with the United Nations. This expert took up his post in May 2000 and has contributed to the enhancement of the United Nations web site in French and to the development of tools for the operation of the site (database, search engine, statistics, etc.)

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

33. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 54/25, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and OIF have cooperated in various fields, in particular, capacity-building for women. ECA has signed a technical cooperation agreement with OIF for the provision of technical support to the implementation of the work programmes (2000-2001) undertaken by the African Centre for Women (ACW) through funding for the recruitment of experts.

34. Cooperation between ECA, ACW and OIF was further strengthened by the agreement in June 2000 which provided initial financial support for the establishment of two subregional networks for the development of African women's entrepreneurship. OIF also funded the recruitment of an expert in communications and public relations to serve in the ECA secretariat at Addis Ababa.

35. The recently opened OIF office in Addis Ababa has greatly facilitated the above-mentioned efforts by, inter alia, encouraging many high-level representatives of French-speaking countries to participate in the development conferences and activities sponsored by ECA.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

36. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and OIF have established ongoing cooperation through active participation in, and support of, UNESCO activities by the Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la

Francophonie (IEPF) within the framework of the technical training programme on world renewable energy. IEPF also contributes to UNESCO by offering an annual summer course for French-speaking countries. This "Summer School on Solar Electricity for Rural and Remote Areas" has been held regularly at UNESCO headquarters since 1988. At the twelfth session of the summer course, held in July 2000 as part of the training programme on world renewable energy, IEPF covered the costs of participation for five students from French-speaking countries and of technical visits to locations in Morocco where solar energy is used.

37. During the past two years, OIF has carried out in-depth studies on cultural diversity and issues relating to globalization, particularly in the form of expert groups in which UNESCO has participated actively. Since 1999, the publicity office of the World Heritage Centre has been cooperating with the OIF Agence universitaire de la francophonie. As a result, four participants from the universities of French-speaking countries (Gabon, Haiti, Senegal and Togo), have received funding. Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar and the University of Benin in Lomé, Togo, sent participants to the sixth international Seminar of Forum UNESCO (University and Heritage) in Byblos, Lebanon, from 10 to 15 December 2000. At the seminar, it was decided to organize a regional workshop for the universities of French-speaking West Africa, to be held in Senegal in January 2002 in cooperation with the Agence universitaire de la francophonie and the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa, located in Dakar.

38. OIF helped finance the translation and publication of the French edition of *The History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind (The History of Mankind)*, edited by UNESCO, Edicef and Hachette.

39. Negotiations have been under way for over a year with a view to the secondment of an associate expert to UNICEF as part of the Young French-speaking Experts Programme of the Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie.

United Nations Development Programme

40. There has been active cooperation between UNDP and OIF in several African countries, particularly Benin, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritius and Rwanda, in the areas of poverty eradication, good governance, combating human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), promotion of activities in the private sector and new information and communication technologies.

41. The two organizations have been working together to promote the private sector in Benin since 1999. UNDP is a member of the Management Committee of the Francophone Support Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises, and several such enterprises have been financed by the Fund through the UNDP programme for promotion of the private sector. There are plans for expanded cooperation in the area of poverty reduction with a focus on micro-finance and on the use of new technologies in government following public administration reforms.

42. In Chad, the two organizations coordinated observation of the May 2001 presidential elections and provided training for trainers of election agents. UNDP, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and OIF financed the establishment of a textile industry cooperative (COTIMAF), which is a source of income for women living in the outskirts of N'Djamena.

43. In Guinea, OIF, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UNDP are helping the Government to finance preparations for a workshop in the context of implementation of the National Programme for the Development of the Private Sector through the Fund for the Integration of French-speaking Least Developed Countries into the Global Trade System.

44. In Mauritania, an OIF-funded project for girls' education will be implemented jointly with the United Nations system. Other areas of cooperation under discussion involve the use of new information and communication technologies through, inter alia, university activities, support for the media, human rights and decentralization.

45. In Rwanda, OIF and UNDP are working on an HIV/AIDS project designed to strengthen local capacities to respond to the challenge of HIV/AIDS and thereby reduce its social and economic impact.

46. The UNDP Office in Lebanon maintains regular contact with OIF although they have not yet undertaken any joint projects. In May 2000, the OIF General Administrator and the UNDP Resident Coordinator in

Lebanon held meetings during which they discussed possibilities for cooperation.

47. At the OIF Summit, which is to be held in Beirut from 26 to 28 October 2001, the United Nations Volunteers and UNDP will promote their joint projects and, in particular, the International Year of Volunteers. In cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and several environmental groups, UNDP will sponsor an exhibit on UNDP-sponsored projects and programmes on the environment; it will also finance the entire segment on environmental management, including the workshops and technical presentations.

48. A strategic partnership has been established between the Sustainable Development Networking Programme in Haiti, which is financed by UNDP, and the Association of Partially or Wholly French-Language Universities (AUPELF), which is sponsored by OIF, with a view to developing the capacities of the principal national bodies working in the field of new information and communication technologies through, inter alia, the creation of Internet sites. The primary purpose of the training provided through this cooperation is to strengthen the abilities and human resources needed to develop Internet sites for the relevant institutions and ministries, including the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Public Works and Communication, the Ministry of Education and the Office of the Prime Minister.

49. This group of Internet site developers will initially establish these sites in the area of administration, thereby substantially strengthening UNDP support for the development of a "cybergovernment" strategy in Haiti. AUPELF has been a key partner in the attainment of these goals, primarily through its involvement in new information and communication technology training. OIF plans to expand its cooperation with AUPELF in these areas and to increase the number of member institutions in the Sustainable Development Networking Programme in Haiti.

50. As the focal point for cooperation between OIF and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UNDP is developing a capacity-building programme for Haitian national bodies working in the area of international administration.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

51. On 8 September 1997, OIF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) signed a framework agreement on cooperation, under which they have strengthened their cooperation through regular consultations. The Office has been involved in several OIF programmes and, in particular, has provided experts to teach in OIF training programmes. OIF has also been represented at the last four sessions of the Commission on Human Rights through its permanent observer mission in Geneva.

52. On 26 October 1999, OHCHR and OIF held a working meeting in Geneva at which a number of proposals were made with a view to strengthening technical cooperation between them in three areas: technical cooperation (implementation of the principal human rights instruments, capacity-building for national institutions and human rights education and training), international dialogue (World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance), and information and reciprocal consultation (increased participation as an observer in the work of the Commission on Human Rights and of its subsidiary body, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights).

53. OIF has also signed an agreement with the Office to provide funding for a young OIF associate expert, a specialist in human rights, who participates actively in the work of the OHCHR Activities and Programmes Branch. The two organizations are currently considering the recruitment of other young French-speaking associate experts.

54. On 28 April 2000, OIF held a working meeting on democracy and the rule of law in Paris with a view to the organization of a high-level symposium on the same topic, which was held in Bamako from 1 to 3 November 2000 and in which OHCHR participated.

55. OHCHR will also participate in the third OIF symposium, which is to be held in Geneva on 26 and 27 September 2001, on the theme, "Cooperation for peace in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: The role of human rights and humanitarian law". This meeting will deal with the promotion of and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, promotion of the rule of law and democracy among the many peoples of the Great Lakes region of Africa and support for local human rights activists.

56. In its biennial programme, OIF gave priority to its participation in the preparatory process for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which has just taken place in Durban, South Africa. OIF took active steps to participate in the preparation for the Conference. It also worked hard to promote, among other activities, the dissemination of relevant documents and, at its various meetings, encouraged the ratification by OIF member States of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

57. Between 2000 and 2001, the UNCTAD secretariat gave OIF substantial help with its assistance to the least developed French-speaking countries in the context of preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, organized by UNCTAD and held recently in Brussels. OIF played an active part in the Conference and issued a statement. In December 2000, UNCTAD submitted a proposal to OIF for a joint UNCTAD-OIF project to benefit a small number of least developed countries by producing a series of publications on the specific consequences of globalization for each country.

58. Through the Agency of la Francophonie, OIF contributes to the funding of a trust fund for capacity-building in developing countries in relation to such issues as international investment agreements (IIAs). The Trust Fund, set up by UNCTAD, became operational in December 2000 following an assessment of UNCTAD activities relating to IIAs and the adoption of the programme at the tenth session of UNCTAD, held in Bangkok in February 2000. A large number of activities have been launched in this area, including the organization of three series of workshops on negotiating bilateral investment treaties, as a result of which a number of such treaties have been signed; a pilot seminar for non-governmental organizations in Namibia; a regional World Trade Organization (WTO)/UNCTAD symposium on trade, investment and development in Kuala Lumpur; a WTO/UNCTAD round table with business sector representatives in Bangkok; and the introduction of an intensive training course for English- and French-speaking IIA negotiators. An intensive training course for French-speaking African countries took place in Alexandria, Egypt, from 5 to 15 June 2001. With assistance from the Trust Fund, other titles have been published in the UNCTAD Series on issues in international investment agreements, including such topics as "International investment agreements: Flexibility for development", "Transfer of funds" and "Environment". Papers on social responsibility, home country measures, host country operational measures and illicit payments are in preparation.

59. The FRANCODE programme to promote capacity-building in the area of international trade and enterprise development receives technical assistance from UNCTAD and also enjoys financial support from OIF. The aim of the programme is to develop the human resources capacity of OIF member countries in the sphere of international trade, the long-term objective being to enhance their negotiating capacity so that they can participate more actively and effectively in multilateral negotiations and, at the same time, develop the competitiveness of their export enterprises. The focus is on training trainers and developing a network of French-speaking training centres which will operate the programme. The training segment of the programme is run jointly by UNCTAD and WTO in cooperation with the Institut national de développement economique in Bucharest, the Institut Supérieur de Comptabilité et administration des enterprises in Casablanca, the Institut francophone de l'entreprenariat in Mauritius and Senghor University in Alexandria. In 2000, four workshops on multilateral international trade negotiations were organized in Bucharest, Casablanca, Mauritius and Alexandria. Some candidates selected during these workshops attended a workshop for the training of trainers, held in Alexandria in February 2001.

60. Talks are taking place between the Agency of la Francophonie and UNCTAD on the possibility of jointly organizing a seminar on the potential and strategies for funding cultural industries in the francophone countries.

61. Following the signing, in 1999, of a cooperation agreement between OIF and UNCTAD, OIF undertook to fund, for a period of two years, associate experts and young professionals wishing to work for UNCTAD. Two associate experts from OIF member developing countries or countries in transition are currently working under this scheme in the UNCTAD Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities.

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

62. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) collaborates with OIF through the Agency of la Francophonie in the execution of several projects, including:

(a) The international civil service training programme run by the Intergovernmental Agency of la Francophonie and UNITAR in conjunction with the International Institute for Public Administration and the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon, designed specifically for national officials from sectoral ministries of French-speaking developing countries and Eastern European countries. The seven-month training programme familiarizes participants with international public administration and multilateral mechanisms. It also offers practical experience in how international organizations function. Instruction is given in Yaoundé, Paris and Geneva over a period of four months. It is supplemented by three-month internships in international organizations;

(b) The environmental legislation training programme, which offers a distance-learning course on international environmental legislation. The French version of the course is made possible by the financial contribution of the Agency of la Francophonie;

(c) The development of an electronic distance-learning system for improving the efficiency of distance-learning mechanisms for international environmental legislation courses, with assistance from contributions by the Francophone Information Highway Fund.

IV. Participation in conferences organized by the United Nations system and OIF

63. The United Nations was represented at high level at the eighth Summit of Heads of State and Government held at Moncton in September 1999, the Conference of Women of la Francophonie in February 2000 and the Bamako Symposium on the Practices of Democracy, Rights and Freedoms in the French-speaking Community.

64. For its part, OIF has been represented at numerous conferences and meetings organized under United Nations auspices. In addition to those mentioned in earlier paragraphs, OIF was represented at the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions of the General Assembly, the Millennium Summit and the special sessions of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, adopted in Barbados, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, as well as the recent United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. On each of the latter four occasions and at other United Nations meetings, such as those of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the OIF member countries submitted a joint statement reflecting the position of the French-speaking group on the subject under consideration.

V. Observations

65. Since my last report, cooperation between the United Nations and OIF has grown even closer. It embraces a growing number of areas of activity in which the two organizations have a shared interest. It is characterized by a clear awareness of their respective comparative advantages and by a constant concern for complementarity. This applies both in the political sphere, in which OIF supports the work of the United Nations and plays an increasingly active role in accordance with the objectives of the Charter of la Francophonie, adopted in Hanoi in 1997, and in economic, social and cultural areas, as evidenced by the number and quality of the cooperation activities undertaken jointly by the United Nations system and OIF. Continued personal contacts and working meetings between United Nations and OIF officials should lead to a yet deeper collaboration with a view to improving the efficacy of the efforts of both organizations.